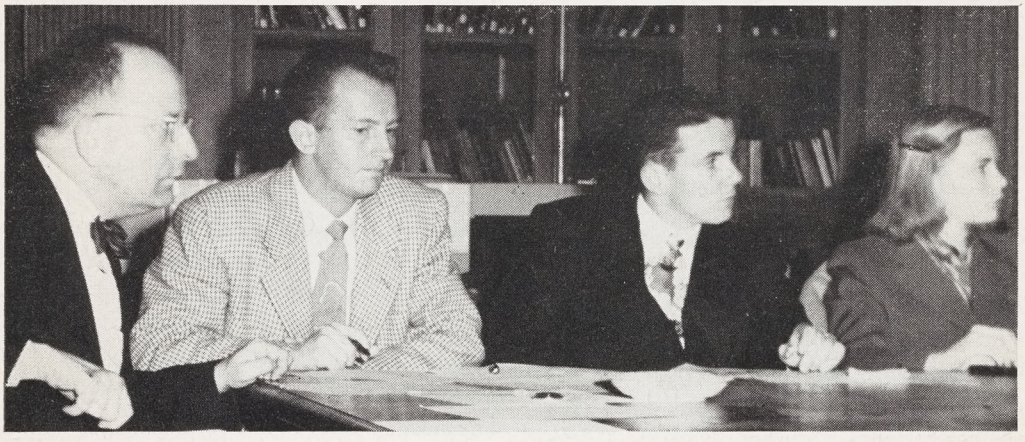
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SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION BULLETIN
DECEMBER 1949 • VOL. 15 • NO. 9

## STUDENT ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION HELD

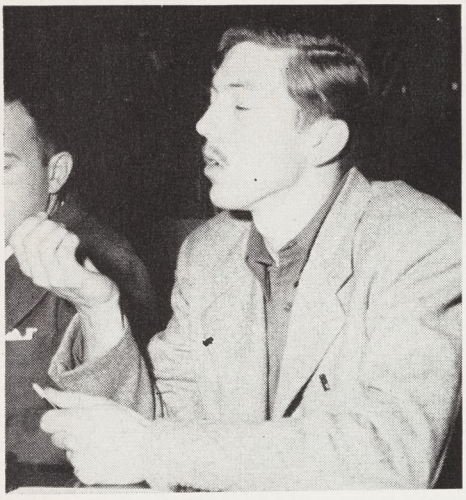


Round Table participants listen attentively as one of their group carries on the discussion. Left to right: Alfred Frankenstein, Edward Kincaid, Walter Thompson and Connie Leeman. Photo by Helen Howell.

The California School of Fine Arts was the scene of an unprecedented student round table discussion on November 8. With Alfred Frankenstein as moderator, the group discussed the question: "Does Primary and Secondary Schooling adequately fulfill the potential artist's requirements as a foundation for advanced art training? Or does it, through mis-education or laxity, stifle the student's interest in art? If the latter is the case, what can be done to correct the situation?"

Eight of the leading bay region schools were represented on the panel: College of Marin by Miss Mary Brothers; College of Arts and Crafts by Charles Link; Mills College by Connie Leeman; San Francisco State College by Mr. Barnhouse; San Francisco City College by Walter Thompson; Stanford University by Edward Kincaid; and San Jose State by Marilyn Zeller and Howard Plumm. The California School of Fine Arts was represented by W. Morehouse and Sturges Mower. Mr. Frankenstein opened the discussion by calling on Edward Kincaid, who felt that the lack of interest in art by the student is the result of home environment rather than inadequate schooling. Mr. Barnhouse, San Francisco State College's representative, attributed lack of interest in art to schooling. Specialization, he claimed, is responsible. Barnhouse felt that the problem can be solved by the integration of art with other subjects. He also brought forth the point that the attitude toward art and artists is another important factor in preliminary art training.

W. Morehouse was also of the opinion that the schools have failed to give the embryonic artist the proper foundation for advanced art. This failure is due to miseducation. Morehouse stated that, in his own case, the schools failed to provide him with any stimulus for following art. As a



CSFA Student, W. Morehouse, gropes for a phrase to adequately express his views during the discussion.

consequence, he was forced to seek it for himself.

Agreeing that primary and secondary schools have failed in art education, Connie Leeman pointed out that too many schools of higher learning are neglecting the aesthetic sense. Sturges Mower, CSFA student, felt that the student is stifled by the instructor's preconceived ideas concerning art. Concurring in this belief were Walter Thompson, San Jose State, and Charles Link, California College of Arts and Crafts. Thompson maintained that the teacher holds the all-important role and must guide and encourage the student without too strong a personal influence.

The problem, "What is art and how should it be taught?", raised the final question: "What can be done to correct the situation?" Media for the beginning student was then discussed, and this subject stimulated an interesting exchange of ideas. Finger-painting, in particular, incited a great deal of controversy. Some of the speakers felt that finger-painting is an ideal medium, since it is simple and direct; others argued that the simplicity of finger-painting only serves to disguise the medium.

The lively interest engendered by this first Student Round Table should be the basis for future discussions of equal benefit to all concerned.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

*(Thomas C. Howe, Director of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, answers our question: "How do YOU think exhibitions of painting and sculpture should be selected?")*

"In 1946, the California Palace of the Legion of Honor inaugurated the policy of holding a series of annual exhibitions of contemporary painting with a view to establishing on the west coast an annual comparable in size, scope and importance to such nationally known yearly shows as the Carnegie and the Whitney annuals. It is on the basis of experience gained from the three exhibitions held thus far that I will attempt to answer your question. That we changed the procedure of assembling the show each year is indicative of the fact that we felt the process of selection could be improved upon; that we might adopt a somewhat different pattern with a future annual would indicate that we are not yet altogether satisfied that we have found the happiest solution to this perplexing problem. The first of these annuals was open to all living artists. There were no invited entries. Each artist was allowed to submit two pictures, only one of which might be selected. The Jury of Selection consisted of three members: two museum directors and one professional art critic.

The second, open to all artists living in the United States, was a part-juried, part-invited show. Artists submitting paintings to the Jury were limited to a single entry. The Jury of Selection was composed of a professional art critic, the head of a University Art Department, and a nationally-known collector of contemporary art.

The third was also a part-juried, part-invited show. The invited section, as in the case of the exhibition of the preceding year, was chosen from the country at large. The juried section was drawn from artists living within a fifty-mile radius of San Francisco. Each artist was entitled to submit two paintings, from which the Jury might select one. There was a five-man Jury, consisting of two museum directors and three profes-

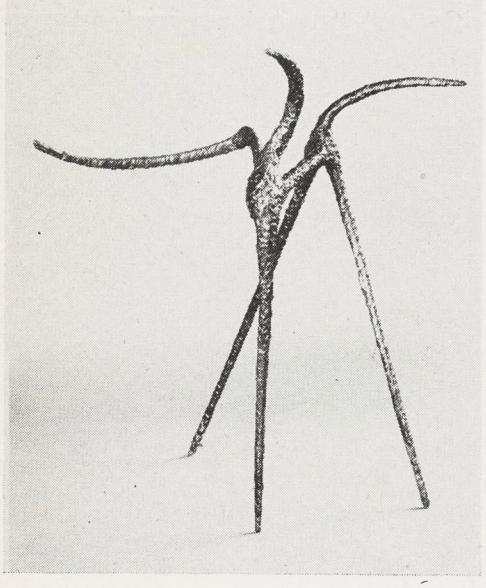
sional art critics. Our first annual had the virtue, inherent in all open shows, of affording an opportunity for the emergence of gifted unknowns. But it also had the disadvantage of failing generally to attract entries from artists of established reputation, notwithstanding the fact that the awards were outright cash awards of generous proportions—not purchase prizes.

One may regret that nationally-known artists, while willing to have their works considered by a Jury of Awards, will not, as a rule, submit them to a Jury of Selection. However, they are hardly to be censured for taking the stand that the eminence they have attained entitles them to jury-free participation in important exhibitions. It is just one of the things that a museum organizing such a show must expect to face.

In the case of our last two annuals, as indicated above, we invited those artists without whom we felt the show would have failed to be representative of the best that is being done in painting throughout the country today; and, at the same time, we preserved the open character of the show through maintaining a juried section. Once the entire show was assembled, all participants were equally eligible for the awards. I have mentioned the open show and the part-juried, part-invited show. A third is the all-invited exhibition, in which a high level of quality can be guaranteed, but one from which the probability of uncovering new talent is virtually eliminated since the choice is usually confined to artists of known reputations. It seems to me that there are three answers to your question. If you want to give all artists an equal chance, the open show is the only solution. If quality is the primary objective, the all-invited show is the logical answer. If you want a combination of the two, then the part-juried, part-invited exhibition, is, in my opinion, the obvious choice."

THOMAS CARR HOWE, JR.

## STUDENT ART EXHIBITION HELD



Sculpture by Harold Bernard share honors —photos by Gene Petersen



Richard McDonald's Prize-winning oil

The first in a series of Student Association Exhibitions was recently held at the California School of Fine Arts. First prize of Fifty Dollars was shared by Harold Bernard and Richard McDonald. Second, third and fourth prizes were awarded, respectively, to Trudi Senftleben, David Simpson and C. Goldsheid.

## STUDENTS EXHIBIT AT NATIONAL CERAMIC SHOW

Original ceramics, the work of two students of the California School of Fine Arts, have been selected by ceramic experts for inclusion in the 14th Ceramic National now on view at the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, Syracuse, New York.

Charles Griffin Farr and Don Siegfried, both advanced students in the Ceramic Department, are represented. The former shows a large free form ceramic container and the latter a hand-thrown casserole and a beverage jug. The National is probably one of the most rigidly screened exhibitions in the country. Works must pass both regional and national juries before their inclusion in what is conceded to be the most significant exhibition of its kind.

Recent graduates of the School who also are showing works in the current National are Rex Mason, Jayne Huxmann and Rosemary Grimes. Miss Grimes is now conducting advanced studies in Europe and Miss Huxmann and Mr. Mason are operating ceramic studios in San Francisco.

The Ceramic Department is headed by Whitney Atchley and Hal Riegger, who are both exhibitors in the current 14th Ceramic National. San Francisco will see the exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art in September, 1950.

## SFAA LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDED TO MR. SCOTT

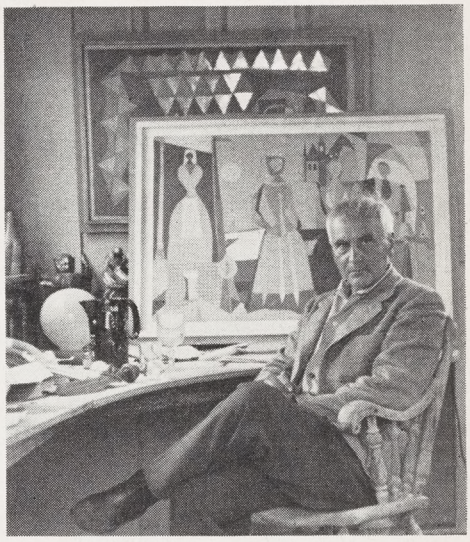
On October 27, the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Art Association awarded a life membership to Mr. Laurance I. Scott. Mr. Scott, a Director of the Board since 1923, has distinguished himself as First Vice-President and as chairman of several important committees during his many years of devoted service.

## SFAA EXHIBITION CALENDAR

February 10—March 12: Annual of Painting and Sculpture, San Francisco Museum of Art.

May 24—June 18: Annual of Drawings and Prints, San Francisco Museum of Art.

## SELF-PORTRAIT: JEAN VARDA



—photo by Dr. Karl J. Deissler

*(Recently, we had the delightful experience of lunching with the incomparable Jean Varda. Somewhere—between the minestrone and the scallopine—it occurred to us that a fascinating life story was unfolding. We present portions of it herewith—Ed.)*

Varda's art education was attained in the "Paris Gutters", there being, according to Jean, no way of getting formal art training other than through patronage of local bistros. In 1939, Varda was offered the opportunity of exhibiting in New York. Immediate complications ensued when the Customs Service decided that Jean's works were definitely not to be classed as "art". Our hapless hero was charged $254.35 for the misfortune of using stones, mirrors, paper and metal instead of the more common oil and watercolor mediums. 72 artists, critics and art collectors then retaliated with a petition to the effect that "We declare that Mr. Varda IS an artist". This overwhelming vote of confidence (which no doubt shook the Customs Service to the very roots of its existence) resulted in the prompt refund of $254.35 to Jean Varda, Artist.

Jean considers his greatest achievement to be the fact that he once was "instrumental in the unhinging of an art critic". This some-

what dubious honor occurred in Chicago where a local critic called Varda " a hoax and a charlatan". Purchasing two hideous still-lifes in a 5 and 10c store, Varda signed them and delivered the two "masterpieces" to said art critic. Then, Jean jokingly wrote a letter to the effect that his modern art WAS a hoax and that the enclosed still-life pictures were really his most treasured productions. Completely won over by Varda's "confession", this unfortunate critic wrote Jean that she loved his pictures and would hang them over her mantlepiece. Her next newspaper story was headlined: "Modern Artist Slaps at Modern Art", and the story read that a young, attractive Greek artist had confessed that Modern Art **was** a hoax. (Varda assures us that he has the documents to prove this amazing story and we, for one, believe it.—Ed.)

## ABRAHAM ROSENBERG TRAVELING FELLOWSHIP COMPETITION

The San Francisco Art Association is now receiving applications for the next award of the Abraham Rosenberg Traveling Fellowship. Each year this Fellowship is given to assist artists of exceptional qualifications toward making a contribution to the culture of America through painting or sculpture. To foster art in America, the late Abraham Rosenberg bequeathed an endowment fund to encourage gifted artists who have demonstrated their ability to accomplish original work of professional quality. Applicants must be, or have been, registered in the California School of Fine Arts for at least two regular semesters.

For further information, applicants should contact the San Francisco Art Association, 800 Chestnut Street, San Francisco.

## SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION WELCOMES THESE NEW MEMBERS

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Mr. Stephen Walter • Mr. Donald Howard Dudley • Mrs. Frank Gerbode
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